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ABSTRACT

This article is designed to assist planners of inservice programs to broaden the range of courses and other types of activities offered within their system of training. Five basic dimensions of an inservice course must be considered: time, people, form, objectives, and sponsor. These dimensions are expanded into a comprehensive working checklist based on evidence suggesting that the items listed are those most strongly influential in determining the type and nature of a particular inservice course. A method for generating new ideas about types of courses is described based on the checklist. (JMI)

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DIMENSIONS OF INSERVICE COURSES FOR TEACHERS

A method of generating varied types of courses

A planning game
prepared for the N.S.W. State Development Committee
for Inservice Education

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PREFACE

This article was written in an attempt to help meet a specific need in inservice education.

In New South Wales the inservice program has been largely decentralised. A State Development Committee appointed by the Director General of Education advises on general policy but effective control of inservice education has been given to teachers. Eleven regional inservice committees have been established and each determines the scope and types of inservice courses offered within its region.

From time to time chairmen of regional committees meet to discuss general problems and policies and to exchange information on programs. At a meeting held in April 1976 a number of chairmen commented that although the decentralised program had been functioning for barely two years, there was already some indication that committees were beginning to regress to a stereotyped approach to courses. There seemed to be a need to give some stimulation to innovation by providing information on alternative approaches to inservice courses. This article presents one rather "light-hearted" method of increasing the variety of types of courses that may be offered. The procedure is like a game of chance and should not be regarded too seriously. Nevertheless it may lead to some rethinking about an overall program of courses for teachers.

Rex Meyer

24 May 1976

INTRODUCTION

Programs for the continuing inservice education of teachers involve many activities other than courses. Internships, "within-school" development programs, tours and visits, consultancies, conferences, and research activities are just a few of a possible range of such activities. It remains true, however, that courses of study or training workshops arranged specifically for individuals or groups form a central part of any inservice program for teachers.

Provided they are relevant, carefully organised, well presented, and have clear objectives, inservice courses can be highly effective in improving the professional competence of teachers. However there can be a problem of sameness. Within any one system of training, within one region or within a given school or group of schools, there is some danger that types of courses offered for the continuing education of teachers may become stereotyped. This may be due to one or more factors such as the following.

1. Course planners may have access only to a limited range of alternatives.
2. Resources may be limited or unknown.
3. Policy may be to meet only ad hoc needs.
4. There may only be a few categories of teachers needing inservice assistance.
5. It may be hard to define the precise needs of the teachers in the system or the region.
6. There may be organisational, financial or administrative constraints that force regression to a stereotyped pattern.
7. There may be resistance to innovation.

This article is designed to assist inservice planners to broaden the range of courses offered within their system of training. It does not offer solutions to the many causes of regression to the stereotype.

It merely attempts to give some ideas about types of courses in the hope that through exploring previously unconsidered alternatives some course planners may be in a better position to introduce innovations and so maintain interest through variety.

FIVE BASIC DIMENSIONS OF AN INSERVICE COURSE

In reviewing types and patterns of inservice courses it is perhaps helpful to list some of the qualities or dimensions that may need to be considered. Each inservice course could be thought to have five basic dimensions, namely:

I Time
II People
III Form
IV Objectives
V Sponsor.

There are, of course, other dimensions such as the "degree of compulsion" (voluntary or compulsory attendance); or the "use" of the course for various purposes such as improvement of competence; or for certification, promotion or accreditation. The units of these other dimensions, however, have been taken as constants for the purpose of this article simply to reduce the number of variables to be considered. In practical situations decisions about a given course would involve the five basic dimensions moderated by other factors such as degree of compulsion or use to be made of the training by the participants. All dimensions of a course interact. Objectives determine time and form. The type of sponsor influences the category of teacher selected. The form is designed in relation to the needs of those attending -- and so on.

Each of the five basic dimensions is briefly considered below.

Dimension I - Time. Duration of courses and frequency of meetings, whether the courses are full-time or part-time and which hours of the day are involved, are all significant factors in organisation. Perhaps the most significant, however, from the organisational point of view, is the issue of whether or not a particular course should be provided in school time or out of school time. If the course is within school time there are administrative problems to be overcome such as release from duties, provision of "relief" staff and consideration of the impact of teachers' absence on the overall programs of the school. Courses conducted out of school time can be provided at weekends, during the late afternoons and evenings, and during vacations, and each of these different "time-slots" has a particular implication for the type of course to be offered.

Dimension II - People. A decision about for whom the course is intended is a vital dimension in determining the characteristics of a course. Teachers may be categorised in a number of ways such as the following:

. by level	- kindergarten; upper primary; lower secondary, and so on.
. by subject area	- physical education; mathematics; science; reading, etc.
. by educational speciality	- school library work; remedial education; counselling; resource development, etc.
. by administrative responsibility	- principal; subject master or mistress; assistant teacher; teacher's aide, etc.
. by experience	- the beginning teacher; teachers entering a new level of responsibility; teachers returning to the profession after some years away, and so on.
. by involvement in activities related to the professional development of colleagues	- inservice officer; inspector; consultant; director of a teachers' centre; officer of a professional association, etc.

In addition there are people, not actually teachers, who should be catered for -- for example: parents, community leaders involved in education, or municipal librarians, to name just a few.

Each category imposes its own demands on the type of course required.

Dimension III - Form. Courses may take the form of lectures; discussion sessions; individualised study programs including correspondence courses; workshops; demonstrations; or combinations of all of these. In each case the program may be loosely organised or highly structured. There may or may not be an appointed leader. Some courses may involve complex technology, others may rely on simple media. The type of course that emerges will depend very greatly on which of these forms or structures is selected.

Dimension IV - Objectives. The precise formulation of objectives, preferably in terms of behaviours to be developed by participants, is especially important in inservice programs where (usually) contact is limited and where courses deal with highly specific issues. Naturally the objectives chosen will depend on factors such as need, the type of teacher concerned, and the availability of resources. They can be wide-ranging -- for example: improving classroom skills; developing skills needed for the production and use of resources; developing management skills, or fostering skills related to the curriculum. They may be concerned with upgrading knowledge of subject matter, or with techniques of assessment and grading. They may also relate to general educational issues or to questions of community involvement. Whatever the category of objectives, however, their clear formulation is a dominant variable in determining the type of course to be offered.

Dimension V - Sponsor. Traditionally the employer or an agent of the employer has been the main sponsor of inservice courses. Other more conventional sponsors have been universities (usually in terms of subject content) or teacher education institutions and teachers' associations

(usually in terms of the skills of teaching). More recently teachers themselves have accepted more responsibility for their own inservice education and have set up committees or have organised centres to plan and present programs. Other sponsors, less frequently involved but often very effective, include commercial and industrial groups, government departments and agencies, trade associations and training groups in industry and the armed services. Clearly the sponsoring agent can be seen by a teacher as planning to meet some genuine personally expressed need, or alternatively as part of a system imposing policies from above. The nature of sponsorship can determin the quality and tone of a program and so profoundly affect the type of course offered.

Summary of the Basic Dimensions. By way of summary, some of the key factors involved in determining the type of course offered in a program of inservice education are listed below.

Dimension I - Time

1.1 Within school time
1.2 Outside school time
1.3 Combinations of within and outside school time

Dimension II - People

2.1 Those needing initial training or induction programs
2.2 Those needing retraining for new roles
2.3 Those needing continuous training
- within the school
- between schools

Dimension III - Form

3.1 Production workshops
3.2 Training workshops
3.3 Lecture courses
3.4 Discussion courses

Dimension IV - Objectives

4.1 Classroom skills
4.2 Skills in the production of resources
4.3 Management skills
4.4 Skills of using resources
4.5 Curriculum skills
4.6 Upgrading subject matter
4.7 Providing for general education
4.8 Training in community involvement
4.9 Skills of testing and examining

Dimension V - Sponsor

5.1 Teachers and community groups
5.2 Regional committees
5.3 Central committees
5.4 Employers
5.5 Teachers' centres
5.6 Professional associations
5.7 Commerce, industry and government
5.8 Preservice training institutions
5.9 Other institutions of higher education

The next section expands each of these categories into a more comprehensive checklist. This list is fairly arbitrary. Nevertheless it is based on evidence from practise which suggests that the items listed are those most strongly influential in determining the type and nature of a particular inservice course.

A WORKING CHECKLIST

DIMENSION I - TIME

1.1 Within school time

- 1.11 incidental learning only
- 1.12 totally integrated with teaching program
- 1.13 special units of less than one day
- 1.14 between one day and one week
- 1.15 between one week but less than two weeks
- 1.16 greater than two weeks
- 1.17 broken time

1.2 Outside school time

- 1.21 before the school day begins
- 1.22 late afternoon
- 1.23 evenings
- 1.24 weekends
- 1.25 vacations and holidays
- 1.26 correspondence

1.3 Combinations of within and outside school time

- 1.31 "sandwich" courses (alternately at school and on course)
- 1.32 "long" weekends
- 1.33 half day plus evening
- 1.34 correspondence

DIMENSION II - PEOPLE

2.1 Those needing initial training or induction

- 2.11 new teachers' aides
- 2.12 newly appointed school support staff
- 2.13 beginning teachers
- 2.14 staff recently promoted to new levels of responsibility

2.2 Those needing retraining for new roles

- 2.21 those re-entering the profession after some years away
- 2.22 those in sections of the profession currently undergoing rapid change, e.g. teacher librarians, special educators
- 2.23 those changing their roles within a level, e.g. from one subject to another, or from classroom to inservice consultant
- 2.24 those changing levels, e.g. from primary to infants
- 2.25 teacher educators newly placed in training situations

2.3 Those needing continuous training

2.31 Within schools

- 2.311 school support staff
- 2.312 teachers' aides
- 2.313 classroom teachers
- 2.314 school counsellors
- 2.315 teacher librarians
- 2.316 special educators
- 2.317 subject masters and mistresses
- 2.318 school principals and deputies
- 2.319 community groups

2.32 Between schools

- 2.321 senior administrators
- 2.322 curriculum officers
- 2.323 inspectors
- 2.324 consultants
- 2.325 inservice educators
- 2.326 resource developers
- 2.327 teacher educators
- 2.328 community groups

DIMENSION III - FORM

3.1 Production workshops

- 3.11 for producing materials
- 3.12 for producing ideas
- 3.13 for producing both materials and ideas

3.2 Training workshops

- 3.21 Passive (by demonstration)
  - 3.211 real situation only
  - 3.212 simulation only
  - 3.213 combination of real and simulated situation
- 3.22 Participatory (by practical involvement)
  - 3.221 real situation only
  - 3.222 simulation only
  - 3.223 combination of real and simulated situation

3.3 Lecture courses

- 3.31 formal lectures only
- 3.32 lectures plus some other activity such as discussion

3.4 Discussion courses

- 3.41 leaderless and unstructured
- 3.42 leaderless but otherwise structured
- 3.43 with leader but otherwise unstructured
- 3.44 with leader and structured

DIMENSION IV - OBJECTIVES

4.1 Classroom skills

- 4.11 improving standard techniques of teaching
- 4.12 extending the range of conventional teaching techniques
- 4.13 newer methods of teaching, e.g. open plan, integrated day, contract methods
- 4.14 using audio-visual equipment
- 4.15 communication skills
- 4.16 innovation in the classroom
- 4.17 obtaining and using feedback for self evaluation
- 4.18 developing creativity

4.2 Skills involved in producing resources

- 4.21 understanding media
- 4.22 production of print materials
- 4.23 production of non-electronic resources (other than printed)
- 4.24 production of electronic resources
- 4.25 production of multi-media resources

4.3 Management skills

- 4.31 determining the aims of schooling
- 4.32 planning for change
- 4.33 interpersonal relationships
- 4.34 leadership skills
- 4.35 stimulating innovation
- 4.36 administrative techniques
- 4.37 staff management
- 4.38 systems approach to management
- 4.39 timetabling

4.4 Skills of using resources

- 4.41 awareness of range of resources
- 4.42 selection and management of resources
- 4.43 relationships between objectives and resources
- 4.44 relationships between strategies and resources
- 4.45 evaluation of resources

4.5 Curriculum skills

- 4.51 writing objectives
- 4.52 designing a program of studies
- 4.53 selecting and using resources
- 4.54 the library as a curriculum resource centre
- 4.55 evaluation of curricula
- 4.56 curriculum innovation

4.6 Upgrading subject matter

- 4.61 Within a level
  - 4.611 within a discipline
  - 4.612 interdisciplinary
- 4.62 Between levels
  - 4.621 within a discipline
  - 4.622 interdisciplinary

4.7 Providing for general education

- 4.71 personal development
- 4.72 cultural awareness
- 4.73 broadening general educational background
- 4.74 improving reading
- 4.75 improving numeracy
- 4.76 history of the employing system
- 4.77 philosophy of the employing system
- 4.78 communication theory

4.8 Training for community involvement

- 4.81 the school and the community
- 4.82 deschooling
- 4.83 parental involvement in school management
- 4.84 social responsibilities of the school
- 4.85 community responsibility for the "whole" education of the child
- 4.86 lifelong education
- 4.87 open education

4.9 Skills of testing and examining

4.91 awareness of the range of available tests

4.92 use of various forms of tests

4.93 test construction

4.94 attitude measurement

4.95 measuring practical skills

4.96 measuring cognitive skills

4.97 problems of continuous assessment

4.98 evaluation versus assessment

4.99 techniques of public examining

DIMENSION V - SPONSOR

5.1 Teachers and community groups

- 5.11 school principal
- 5.12 group or individual within the school
- 5.13 between school group
- 5.14 informed citizen
- 5.15 community group
- 5.16 parents' and citizens' association

5.2 Regional committees

- 5.21 of teachers
- 5.22 of inservice educators
- 5.23 of the community
- 5.24 of the employer
- 5.25 combinations of above

5.3 Central committees

- 5.31 representing employers
- 5.32 representing teachers only
- 5.33 representing the community at large
- 5.34 representing an international organisation
- 5.35 combinations of above

5.4 Employers

- 5.41 decentralised
- 5.42 centralised

5.5 Teachers' centres

- 5.51 local
- 5.52 regional
- 5.53 central

5.6 Professional associations

- 5.61 teachers' associations
- 5.62 subject associations
- 5.63 research institutes
- 5.64 educational associations
- 5.65 environmental associations
- 5.66 trade and industrial unions

5.7 Commerce, industry and government

- 5.71 trade associations
- 5.72 professional institutes, e.g. Institute of Management
- 5.73 publishers
- 5.74 manufacturers
- 5.75 primary producers
- 5.76 government departments
- 5.77 commercial trainers

5.8 Preservice training institutions

- 5.81 teachers' colleges
- 5.82 teacher education programs of colleges of advanced education
- 5.83 teacher education programs of universities
- 5.84 private training institutions

5.9 Institutions of higher education (other than teacher education programs)

- 5.91 technical colleges or polytechnics
- 5.92 colleges of advanced education
- 5.93 universities
- 5.94 research establishments
- 5.95 specialised training centres, e.g. art schools, paramedical institutes

* * * * *

ONE WAY TO GENERATE NEW IDEAS ABOUT TYPES OF INSERVICE COURSES

Unless care is taken there is a danger that groups organising inservice programs may perpetuate courses or types of courses because of some previous success or because it is administratively easier to maintain a standard program than to innovate. It is necessary to be sensitive to changing needs and to try to organise novel and less conventional types of courses if the interest and involvement of teachers is to be assured.

This final section sets out a simple method based on the previously described checklist for generating new ideas about types of courses. It is arbitrary and is not meant to be taken too seriously -- think of it as a form of educational "party game". It is simply designed to help in the re-ordering or re-arrangement of factors. It is based on the same principle as a more familiar "phrase generator".

A 'COURSE GENERATOR'

In organising new types of courses catering for various categories of teachers, try as a starting point a random combination of five units, one from each "Dimension". This is a form of "course generator", developed along the same lines as a "phrase generator" which randomly sequences words from defined categories.

The table on pages 17-19 may help. Use the table in the following way:

(i) From <u>each</u> of the five columns headed Dimensions I, II, III, IV and V take out the code number of one unit <u>at random</u>. Do this by running a finger down the first column, stopping at random and reading off the unit code at that point. Repeat this for each column in turn. Write the five unit code numbers in a vertical column.

(ii) Use each unit code number to identify the relevant unit from the preceding checklist.

(iii) Write the full descriptor (headings and sub-headings) of each unit beside its unit code number.

The following example illustrates a possible result.

Unit Code Number (randomly selected from the table)	Descriptor (i.e. all the relevant headings and sub-headings from the checklist)
1.13	Within school time. Special units of less than one day.
2.318	Continuous training within the school. School principals and deputies.
3.212	Training workshop. Passive and using simulation.
4.14	Improving classroom skills. Using audio-visual equipment.
5.75	Commerce, industry, government. Primary producers.

(iv) Scan your list. It may turn out to be a nonsense combination, as in our example. Expecting a group of primary producers to continuously train school principals in school time in the use of audio-visual equipment using training workshops involving simulation, would be, to say the least, most unlikely.

(v) However, keep persisting. Try other combinations. Sometimes unlikely sets form which turn out to be viable. A random combination could well provide the starting point for an idea about an innovative course which could tap relatively unused resources and yet meet genuine needs. Some examples are given following the table.

TABLE OF COURSE DIMENSIONS AND UNITS

DIMENSION I Time	DIMENSION II People	DIMENSION III Form	DIMENSION IV Objectives	DIMENSION V Sponsor
1.11	2.11	3.11	4.11	5.11
1.12	2.12	3.12	4.12	5.12
1.13	2.13	3.13	4.13	5.13
1.14	2.14		4.14	5.14
1.15		3.211	4.15	5.15
1.16	2.21	3.212	4.16	5.16
1.17	2.22	3.213	4.17	
	2.23	3.221	4.18	5.21
1.21	2.24	3.222		5.22
1.22	2.25	3.223	4.21	5.23
1.23			4.22	5.24
1.24		3.31	4.23	5.25
1.25		3.32	4.24	
1.26			4.25	

Table continued ..

Table of Course Dimensions and Units continued:

DIMENSION I Time	DIMENSION II People	DIMENSION III Form	DIMENSION IV Objectives	DIMENSION V Sponsor
1.31	2.311	3.41	4.31	5.31
1.32	2.312	3.42	4.32	5.32
1.33	2.313	3.43	4.33	5.33
1.34	2.314	3.44	4.34	5.34
	2.315		4.35	5.35
	2.316		4.36	
	2.317		4.37	5.41
	2.318		4.38	5.42
	2.319		4.39	
				5.51
	2.321		4.41	5.52
	2.322		4.42	5.53
	2.323		4.43	
	2.324		4.44	5.61
	2.325		4.45	5.62
	2.326			5.63
	2.327		4.51	5.64
	2.328		4.52	5.65
			4.53	5.66
			4.54	
			4.55	5.71
			4.56	5.72
				5.73
			4.611	5.74
			4.612	5.75
			4.621	5.76
			4.622	5.77

Table continued ...

Table of Course Dimensions and Units continued:

DIMENSION I Time	DIMENSION II People	DIMENSION III Form	DIMENSION IV Objectives	DIMENSION V Sponsor
			4.71	5.81
			4.72	5.82
			4.73	5.83
			4.74	5.84
			4.75	
			4.76	5.91
			4.77	5.92
			4.78	5.93
				5.94
			4.81	5.95
			4.82	
			4.83	
			4.84	
			4.85	
			4.86	
			4.87	
			4.91	
			4.92	
			4.93	
			4.94	
			4.95	
			4.96	
			4.97	
			4.98	
			4.99	

SOME EXAMPLES OF RANDOM COMBINATIONS OF SPECIFIC UNITS

The following randomly devised combinations from the preceding Table and Checklist do perhaps suggest rather novel possibilities. The figures I to V represent the five basic dimensions described on pages 2-5.

EXAMPLE 1

I		II		III		IV		V
1.23	+	2.317	+	3.44	+	4.75	+	5.14

An evening course for subject masters or mistresses organised as a structured discussion (with an assigned leader) designed to improve numeracy skills of the teachers concerned. The course is to be sponsored by a member of the community recognised as an authority in this field.

EXAMPLE 2

I		II		III		IV		V
1.12	+	2.23	+	3.11	+	4.17	+	5.52

A training course given within the school and integrated into the normal teaching program. The course is designed specifically for teachers who have recently changed their roles within a given level of the school system. It is to be arranged as a workshop involving production of materials relating to techniques of obtaining feedback on personal effectiveness. The course is to be organised and monitored by a regional teachers' centre.

EXAMPLE 3

I		II		III		IV		V
1.31	+	2.312	+	3.32	+	4.25	+	5.21

Basically a lecture course but including some practical activity arranged as a "sandwich" program involving some time at school and some time away from school. The course is designed for teachers' aides to help them understand some of the problems involved in the production of multi-media resources. The program is to be sponsored by a regional committee of teachers.

CONCLUSION

There is evidence to suggest that on the whole teachers prefer courses given within school time and offered in a place close to home or school. Teachers give most support to programs which they themselves have planned and organised. The most successful courses are those that meet genuine needs, have well defined objectives and involve activity and maximum participation.

As well, however, it is important to present a richly varied program. One way of achieving this is to extend the range of types of courses. This is most likely to motivate teachers to remain in the program and to assure that their interest is maintained. A careful consideration of unusual combinations of the "dimensions" of a course can sometimes provide a useful approach to innovation.

* * * * *

FURTHER READING

BESSENT, E.W. et al. (1967) Designs for Inservice Education ERIC Document ED011591 University of Texas Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. Washington, D.C.

Presents a useful comparison between various types of inservice programs including the laboratory approach, the classroom experience model and the teaching demonstration model.

CANE, B. (1969) "Inservice training: a study of teachers' views and preferences." National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales. Occasional Publication Series No.22. NFER Slough.

This report describes a survey in Britain on teachers' preferences for various types of inservice course.

EVAUT, M. (1972) "Inservice Education for innovation", National Council for Educational Technology. Occasional Paper No.4. NCET London.

Chapter 4 presents a summary of possible modes of interaction in inservice courses and of the types of courses that may be offered in an overall program of training.

FINCH, A. (1969) Growth inservice education programs that work. Successful School Administration Series, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs.

A useful book for those designing inservice courses for teachers. It gives guidelines for planning an overall program.

HARRIS, B.M., BESSENT, W. & McINTYRE, K.E. (1969) Inservice Education: a guide to better practice. Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs.

A guide to practical activities appropriate for inservice courses.

JOHNSTON, D.J. (1971) Teachers' inservice education. Pergamon Press, Oxford.

This key book is essential reading for inservice educators. Chapter 4 on forms of inservice education and Chapter 5 on the providers of inservice activities are especially relevant.

Leeds University Institute of Education (1973) The Objectives of Teacher Education. National Foundation for Educational Research. NFER Publishing Company, Slough.

A valuable checklist of objectives that form useful starting points for the design of inservice courses.

MEYER, G.R. (1974) Development of a checklist of inservice activities for primary and secondary teachers in Australian schools. C.A.T. Education Monograph No.8 November, Macquarie University Centre for Advancement of Teaching, Sydney.

This monograph lists some of the types of activities that could be considered in designing an overall program of inservice education.

RUBIN, L.J. (1973) Improving inservice education : proposals and procedures for change. Allyn and Bacon, Boston.

This important book provides a useful overview of most of the major issues to be considered in planning an inservice program.